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
Anti-Filipino Race Riots:

A Report made to the *Ingram Institute*
of Social Science, of San Diego, by 

E. S. BOGARDUS, UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, May 15, 1930



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ANTI-FILIPINO RACE RIOTS *

1. THE PROBLEM. Race riots, like earthquakes, are likely to occur somewhere at any time. To study one earthquake is to gain some knowledge of all earthquakes. Likewise to study one race riot is to learn something about race riots in general. We may expect that such knowledge will be of value wherever race riots are likely to occur. If acted upon in time such knowledge may prevent race riots. Human nature the world around is one organic unity; race riots therefore occur the world around under somewhat similar provocations. Knowledge about race riots is of universal interest, meaning, and value.

A study of the anti-Filipino race riots on the Pacific Coast may be expected to throw light on race riots that occur anywhere. Race conflict and race co-operation seem to have certain characteristics in common. If we can understand the anti-Filipino demonstrations, we may learn something of widespread value, and hence look forward to controlling race strife in the future. In this way it may be possible to forestall the destruction of lives and property and the engendering of hatred which accompany these outbreaks.

Within the last two years a number of anti-Filipino demonstrations have occurred on the Pacific Coast. Each succeeding

* A Report of a study made under the auspices of the Ingram Institute of Social Science, San Diego, California.

one has been increasingly serious. The conditions that lead to riots have been spreading and becoming more aggravating. Moreover, few people seem to have a complete grasp of these disturbing conditions. The usual tendency is to allow inter-racial situations to go from bad to worse until a calamity occurs. Then the public wakes up, rises to the occasion, and settles the problem by creating more problems,—by extreme rather than by wise measures.

Anti-Filipino race riots which began in the state of Washington in 1928, occurred at Exeter, California, in October, 1929, and at Watsonville, California, in January, 1930. Both the American and Filipino newspapers have carried extensive reports. At first these reports were sometimes inflammatory but they contained a wide range of facts and interpretations thereof. A few investigations have been made.¹ The disturbances have reached the courts and sentences have reached the record books. In addition to having access to extensive published materials, the writer visited Watsonville in March, 1930² and secured first-hand accounts. These materials were obtained a few weeks after the riots had taken place and hence represented calm and dispassionate judgments; they were particularly valuable because of the time element that had elapsed and because many of

¹ Such as the Bulletin of the Department of Industrial Relations, California, Will J. French, director, San Francisco, 1930, entitled "Facts About Filipino Immigration Into California"; also, the report of the Exeter race riots, prepared by Nicholas T. Rodriguez, and published in digest form in *The Philippine Magazine*, I: p. 6 (Nov. 1929), Los Angeles.

² Through the courtesy of the Ingram Institute of Social Science, San Diego.

the persons concerned were able to view the riots more or less objectively.³

The writer obtained first-hand data on the grounds concerning the race riot which has attracted to date more attention, excitement, and discussion than any other of its kind. These data complement well that which has already appeared in print. The comprehensiveness of the first-hand data is shown by the variety of sources from which the data came. The following classes of people were consulted in securing these materials: (1) unskilled wage-earners who view the Filipinos as labor competitors; (2) business men with whom the Filipinos trade; (3) business men with whom the Filipinos do not trade; (4) ranchers who employ Filipino laborers; (5) idealistic citizens, such as pastors and teachers, who stand for spiritual and civic progress; (6) Filipino "stoop" laborers; (7) Filipino labor contractors; (8) Filipino leaders who are intensely loyal, and (9) Filipino leaders who are loyal but also cosmopolitan in viewpoint.

In each case the persons interviewed were encouraged to state their own observations concerning the anti-Filipino disturbances as freely as possible. No names will be given in this report except as they may have appeared already in print. All such printed references will be cited as footnotes. The attempt in this study has been to understand, not to blame. The riots will be viewed impersonally, as group phenomena, in terms of social conflict and co-operation. It is hoped that this Report will be of benefit to all communities which are subject to race conflicts and which

³ The writer wishes to express deep appreciation to all the individuals who gave their time and attention so generously.

wish to prevent recurrences or new occurrences of such calamities.⁴ There are some contradictions in the data that was gathered, but this is to be expected. When nine different groups of people speak concerning a race riot, it is natural that they should give different accounts of what happened. However, when the variations are scrutinized they are found to contribute to an understanding of the total situation. The variations are helpful in reflecting the different viewpoints and backgrounds of the participants. The situation is somewhat similar to that of nine groups of victims of a volcanic eruption, using different types of colored field glasses and being located on nine different sides of the volcano. Each group would naturally see some things that none of the others saw. Since some might be located on opposite sides of the volcano their reports might seem to be contradictory, but in reality would simply reflect the different reactions to the one and same phenomenon.

2. THE EVENTS. Before an analysis is attempted of the riots, an account will be given of antecedent factors. Before the rioting actually started,⁵ three factors had come into the open which help to explain the situation that was culminating. (1) A few cases of Filipinos had been brought into court of the justices of

⁴ This Report is especially indebted to the columns of both morning and evening newspapers of Watsonville. These columns have furnished important material for analysis. Wherever such data are discussed, references will be made in footnotes, so that interested persons may consult the files of these newspapers and study the contexts in full. Filipino newspapers (there are none in Watsonville) in Stockton, Calif., San Francisco, and Los Angeles have also been helpful, for they throw light on the riots from the Filipinos' viewpoints.

⁵ On January 19th, 1930.

peace of Pajaro township,⁶ and into the county court at Salinas (of Filipinos living in the Watsonville district). The offences were usually "reckless driving" of automobiles.

(2) On January 10, 1930, there appeared newspaper accounts of a set of Resolutions passed in Pajaro (adjoining Watsonville) by the Northern Monterey Chamber of Commerce and written it is stated⁷ by the justice of peace of Pajaro township. The article in the *Pajaronian*, appeared under a double column, first page headline which read: "Resolution Flaying Filipinos Drawn by Judge D. W. Rohrback." The article began as follows: "Coming out square-toed and flat-footed in an expression on the Filipino question, the Northern Monterey Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution Wednesday night (January 8) designating the Filipino population of this district with being undesirable and of possessing unhealthy habits and destructive of the wage scale of other nationalities in agricultural and industrial pursuits." The article continued: "When interviewed this morning Judge Rohrback said the move of the Monterey Chamber of Commerce was but the beginning of an investigation of a situation that will eventually lead to the exclusion of the Filipinos or the deterioration of the white race in the state of California."⁸

The charges made against the Filipinos in this Resolution were as follows: (1) Economic. They accept it is alleged, lower wages than the American standards allow. The new immigrants

⁶ This court is located just across the bridge from Watsonville.

⁷ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 10, 1930, p. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*

coming in each month increase the labor supply and hold wages down. They live on fish and rice, and a dozen may occupy one or two rooms only. The cost of living is very low, hence, Americans cannot compete with them. (2) Health. Some Filipinos bring in meningitis, and other dangerous diseases. Some live unhealthily. Sometimes fifteen or more sleep in one or two rooms. (3) Intermarriage. A few have married white girls. Others will. "If the present state of affairs continues there will be 40,000 half-breeds in California before ten years have passed,"—is the dire prediction.⁹

The Resolutions included the following statement about sending the Filipinos home: "We do not advocate violence but we do feel that the United States should give the Filipinos their liberty and then send those unwelcome inhabitants from our shores that the white people who have inherited this country for themselves and their offspring might live."¹⁰ It is evident that the Northern Monterey Chamber of Commerce did not speak for other Chambers of Commerce for the Resolutions contained the following challenge: "Other Chambers of Commerce have probably passed resolutions endorsing the use of Filipino labor as being indispensable. If that is true, better that the fields of the Salinas Valley should grow into weed patches and our wonderful forests be blackened."¹¹ These and similar statements speak for themselves regarding the impassioned tone of the Resolutions.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Upon the publication of the Resolutions sensitive Filipino leaders promptly replied. A four-page pamphlet entitled "The Torch" appeared within a few days from Salinas. It contained a detailed reply to the Resolutions, by a member of the editorial staff of the *Three Stars*, Stockton, California. It questions vigorously the truth of a number of statements in the Resolutions and replies sharply to the insinuations of others. It questions the Resolutions when they say that boats are arriving on the Pacific Coast with "thousands" of Filipinos and asserts that no boat has come with more than 500 Filipinos and that many come with none.¹² The Resolutions are quoted to the effect that the Filipinos are but "ten years removed from a bolo and a breechclout." If this is true, then it is asked: "Would you not feel proud to have 'emerged' from 'bolo and breechclout' and after ten years be a respectful citizen?"¹³ If the Filipinos live under bad housing conditions, why not report "the case to the State's Building Inspector? Unhealthy? Ring the Health Officer of the State. Don't sit and cry like a Job." Unemployment is charged to the increased use of machinery and to the entering of industry by women. "To discuss the Filipino diet is stupid. Each nation has a particular diet. . . ." To the charge in the Resolutions that "the Filipinos form partnerships and buy good cars and roll along the highways like Solomon in all his glory," the *Torch* replies that the critics "should be glad that the Filipinos, instead of sending their honest-earned money to the Islands" spend it in cars, tires, gasoline and repairs, leaving therefore the dollars in

¹² *The Torch*, Jan., 1930, No. 2. p. 1.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 2.

the United States.¹⁴ The statement in the Resolutions that 75,000 Filipinos had recently held a convention in Los Angeles is declared to be preposterous, and the work of an alarmist,¹⁵ for the total Filipino population of California is less than 75,000; moreover all the Filipinos from all over the state could scarcely come together at one time.¹⁶ Such a gross exaggeration, it is contended, indicates that the whole Resolutions are unreliable. The tone of the two articles in the *Torch* closely parallels the tone of the aforementioned Resolutions. Both have inflammatory characteristics.

A few day later, January 19, a mass meeting of 300 Filipinos was held in a hall at Palm Beach, a few miles west of Watsonville, according to a half page paid advertisement in the Watsonville evening newspaper.¹⁷ As indicated by the statements in this article the reactions of the Filipinos to the Pajaro Resolutions had now reached the stage of formal group action. Sober thought had supplanted the first emotional reactions. After summing up the criticisms levelled at the Filipinos by the Pajaro Resolutions of January 8th, a carefully thought out reply was given point by point, by a Filipino leader, whose ideas were carefully expressed. The document was couched on the whole in dignified not alarmist terms, as illustrated by the following statement: "We simply want, for the sake of the reading public and the American people

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ In the Bulletin of the Department of Industrial Relations, State of California, April, 1930, the total Filipino population of California is given at 31,000 to 34,000.

¹⁷ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 27, 1930, p. 2.

in general, to clarify matters and seek out the truth. Ultimately we want to co-operate within our possibilities in solving this problem." Incoming Filipinos, it is asserted, "go into the fields of work where the workers are essentially Filipinos,—such work as thinning and cutting lettuce, sugar beets, cutting asparagus, planting and cutting celery, planting garlic, picking grapes, etc. In the above mentioned work one can hardly find a white laborer. . . . It is true that there are fields of work wherein the laborers are mostly whites and are being invaded by Filipinos, but I do not see why they should not, provided they do not receive lower wages."¹⁸

Low wages are accepted by other people than the Filipinos, by the Mexicans, for instance, it is declared. Low wages have existed in entire districts of California before any Filipinos arrived. Therefore, to blame low wages upon the Filipinos is not to delve into the whole economics of the question of low wages.¹⁹

On January 11, 1930, a new angle to the race situation in and around Watsonville developed. A small Filipino club leased a dance hall from two Americans at Palm Beach (four or five miles west of Watsonville), imported nine white dance hall girls, and set up a taxi dance hall for the Filipino members. Definite rules of propriety were apparently maintained. The American owners of the property stated that the Filipinos conducted their dances in more orderly fashion than did many American groups who had leased the dance hall property. But the idea of Filipinos dancing with white girls (no matter who the latter were) in-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

censed white young men of Watsonville, and they determined to break up the procedure. As one white person said to the writer: "Taxi dance halls where white girls dance with Orientals may be all right in San Francisco or Los Angeles but not in our community. We are a small city and have had nothing of the kind before. We won't stand for anything of the kind."

On Sunday, the 19th, the anti-Filipino demonstrations began and lasted until the early hours of Thursday morning, the 23rd. Early Sunday afternoon it is said "that several machine loads of American youths went out to the resort (the dance hall at Palm Beach), but were barred by deputies hired to guard the place."²⁰ Later that evening several fights occurred on the streets of Watsonville between Americans and Filipinos. On Monday evening, the 20th, the disturbances continued. "Possibly 200 Americans formed Filipino hunting parties, running in groups from 25 to over 100 persons."²¹ On Tuesday evening, the 21st, "a mob (of white men and boys) attempted to storm the Palm Beach premises. Word had been passed among the boys of the town that a mass meeting of the Filipinos was to be held at Palm Beach. The boys were aware that several white girls were living on the premises and working in the dance hall there. This fact infuriated them and at eleven o'clock last night full thirty machines, filled with flaming youth."²² went to Palm Beach, but were met by the owners of the beach resort who held them at bay with guns until "shortly after midnight" when the sheriff, deputies, and con-

²⁰ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 21, 1930.

²¹ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 21, 1930.

²² *Ibid.*, January 22, 1930.

stables arrived and "made short work of the mob."²³ Before the arrival of the officers there was some shooting but no one was seriously hurt.

On Wednesday evening, the 22nd, the rioting reached its climax. Violence developed into destroying property, beating Filipinos; and finally one Filipino was killed. "Forty-six terror-stricken Filipinos beaten and bruised, cowered in the City Council room . . . after being rescued from a mob of 500 infuriated men and boys who, being robbed of their prey, shattered windows and wrecked the interior of the brown men's dwellings."²⁴ Further light on the rioting is given: "To the accompaniment of pistol shots, clubbings and general disorder, . . . it is believed that 700 trouble-seekers, armed with clubs and some firearms, attacked Filipino dwellings, destroyed property, and jeopardized lives. The most serious rioting occurred on the San Juan road in Pajaro about 10 o'clock . . . when a mob estimated at 250 men entered several Filipino dwellings and clubbed the occupants."²⁵

Then came the fatal shot, and the ending of the rioting. A headline and an opening sentence tell the story tersely: "Wild Rioters Murder Filipino in Fourth Night of Mob Terror," and "Mob Violence in Watsonville is ended."²⁶ A published account reads: "Near midnight a carload of rowdies drove to the ranch (Murphy) and began firing into it. The unfortunate men

²³ *Watsonville Register*, January 22, 1930.

²⁴ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 23, 1930.

²⁵ *Watsonville Register*, January 23, 1930, p. 1.

²⁶ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 23, 1930, p. 1.

(or boys) trapped like rats were forced into a closet where they huddled and prayed.”²⁷ One of the Filipino boys, Fermin Tober, did not follow the others. The next morning, “it was discovered that a heavy bullet, tearing through the walls and a door of the bunkhouse had pierced Tober’s heart.”²⁸

The better elements of the city became disturbed by the extremes to which the rioting was going. A special editorial made a strong plea as follows (in part):²⁹ “After the disgraceful scenes of last evening local authorities should come to the conclusion that patience has ceased to be a virtue and that strenuous measures should be adopted to prevent any further demonstrations of that character.

“It is anything but inspiring in this year of our Lord, 1930, to witness a mob of some 400 or 500 individuals attacking a dozen or so frightened Filipinos, rushing into their houses, dragging them out, beating them up, and then wrecking or damaging their domiciles. That is not Americanism.”

These words are followed by an appeal to save the reputation of the city from the adverse reactions that were being created.³⁰ The editorial continues: “As it is now, this town has been blazoned over the United States as being the scene of race hatred and violent demonstrations against a race so numerically weak,

²⁷ *Watsonville Register*, January 24, 1930, p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Eastern papers in the United States were publishing articles carrying headlines, such as: “Californians Terrorize Filipinos.”

in our midst, that they are powerless to offer any resistance to the violent treatment given them.”³¹

A double-headed request follows, first to the business men and second to the mob leaders. “The business men of this town should awake from their lethargy and in mass meeting assembled, make it known in no uncertain terms to these mob leaders that their conduct is not approved. A word to the members of that mob. We again ask you, as we did yesterday, what do you expect to accomplish by these demonstrations? You are injuring your own cause. Your conduct is offensive to all right-thinking citizens.”³²

Somewhat belatedly the leading citizens of Watsonville came to the rescue of the reputation of the city, and of the Filipinos. The headline in the *Evening Pajaronian*³³ summed up part of the reactions: “Volunteer Deputies Bring Welcome Peace to Turbulent Town.” The American Legion, the Rotary, the Kiwanis, and other organizations took action in support of law and order, and of protection for the Filipinos.³⁴

The *Evening Pajaronian* of the 24th reports that seven (white) boys were brought into the court of the justice of the peace of Pajaro township for preliminary hearing on the charge of rioting. At the hearing a total of eight boys were bound over to the Superior Court of Monterey County. The justice is quoted as stating that he hoped “with all his heart that the judge of the

³¹ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 23, p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ January 24, p. 1.

³⁴ According to statements made to the writer.

superior court would be lenient in handling their cases as he did not consider them criminals.”³⁵ On February 17, six of the eight youths pleaded guilty at Salinas for attacking Filipinos.³⁶ On February 25th, the eight were sentenced to serve two years in the county jail. Probation was granted four. The other four were sent to the county jail for thirty days; then put on probation for two years, during which time they must keep away from pool halls, abstain from intoxicating liquors; they must never molest Filipinos and on the other hand they are to lead sober, industrious lives.³⁷ At the inquest over the body of Fermin Tobers it was decided that the person who had fired the fatal shot was unknown.

Within a week after the rioting, the chairman of the California Athletic Commission “announced a ban on Filipino boxers on all programs in the state.”³⁸ Protests were immediately made by American promoters. Even in Watsonville an American audience in March applauded the suggestion that the Filipinos be allowed again to appear in boxing matches with Americans. One promoter, addressing a crowd in Watsonville, is reported as saying that the fight game could not be run in Watsonville if the Filipinos were not allowed on the cards. “The crowd was unanimous in roaring approval to the proposition of having some real fast Filipinos on the next card.”³⁹

³⁵ *Evening Pajaronian*, February 11, 1930.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, February 17, 1930.

³⁷ *Evening Pajaronian*, February 25, 1930, p. 1.

³⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1930.

³⁹ *Evening Pajaronian*, March 17, 1930.

But how did the Filipinos conduct themselves throughout the riots and afterwards? A few at the start were evidently inclined to fight back. A few argued vigorously. An editorial writer in the *Watsonville Register*, says: "A disposition to too much argument on the part of the Filipinos is apparent at this critical period. Their advisers should caution them against it."⁴⁰ When the rioting was at its worst the Filipinos did not fight back. If they had done so, the riots would doubtless have turned into massacres. From out-side cities, such as Stockton and San Francisco there were two reactions: first, of those who were incensed and excited. A few evidently responded to a communist circular calling upon the Filipinos to rise up and fight for justice.⁴¹

Second, there were the Filipino leaders who advised caution. Under date of January 24, a mass meeting of Filipinos in the nearby city of San Jose was reported. The purpose was "to prevent the Filipinos from resorting to violence. Filipinos will be asked to rely on the police for protection if necessary, rather than taking the law into their own hands"⁴² Early in February the Filipino Emergency Association came into existence in San Francisco for the specific purpose of "preventing participation by Filipinos in any further California race rioting with whites."⁴³ The additional statement appeared in the *Pajaronian* that the Filipinos "showed co-operation with local authorities by avoid-

⁴⁰ January 22, 1930, p. 1.

⁴¹ *Evening Pajaronian*, January 25, 1930.

⁴² *Ibid.*, January 24, 1930.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, February 6, 1930.

ing conspicuous places where they would mingle with whites.”⁴⁴ When the trial of the Watsonville youths took place, the Filipino Emergency Association sent letters from San Francisco to the district attorney and others urging clemency “in the interest of good will and harmony between Americans and Filipino citizens.”⁴⁵

Filipinos all over the United States and especially in the Philippines were greatly disturbed by the rioting in Watsonville and particularly by the killing of one of their number. In general the reactions took the form of increased demands for independence of the Philippine Islands. In Manila particularly did excitement run high. Demands for independence were coupled with public remonstrances against the mistreatment of Filipinos in the United States. February 2 was observed as “National Humiliation Day” by several thousand Filipinos “who gathered for services protesting against recent anti-Filipino demonstrations at Watsonville, San Francisco, and San Jose, Calif.”⁴⁶ The adverse reactions in Manila broke out in March in a school strike involving perhaps six thousand high school pupils because of asserted insults directed against the Filipinos by one of the teachers.⁴⁷ When the body of Fermin Tober, slain at Watsonville, arrived in Manila, “thousands of Filipinos took part in orderly demonstrations.”⁴⁸ Tober’s body lay in state for two

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Watsonville Register*, February 24, 1930.

⁴⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1930.

⁴⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 1930.

⁴⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, March 13, 1930.

days. Tober was declared a national hero and for a time at least occupied a pedestal along with Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines. A member of the Philippine Legislature was quoted as having said at the burial services that the bullet which killed Tober "was not aimed at him particularly; its principal target was the heart of our race," and Tober was said to have been slain by a mob of "bloodthirsty Americans."⁴⁹ The reverberations of the Watsonville riots were heard around the world. Feelings were aroused to a fever pitch; ill will was multiplied; Filipino-American race adjustments were made infinitely more difficult. Here and there, however, Filipinos pointed out that not all Americans were vicious, bloodthirsty, or even unfriendly. Here and there ill will and rioting were admitted by Americans as hindrances rather than helps in settling racial conflicts.

3. CAUSAL FACTORS. The statement of the events leading to the Watsonville riots, of the rioting itself, and of the aftermath have been made as objective and impersonal as possible. An analysis of the facts presented and of the occurrences as reported remains to be made. This analysis is infinitely more difficult than to state the facts in their natural order of occurrence. The aim, however, will be to keep the analysis on rational grounds, objective, and impersonal as possible.

The underlying causal factors are many. Any one theory of interpretation is dangerous and inadequate. No one cause or set of causes evidently is basic to all the others. A number of interlocking and inter-aggravating factors are found to underlie the anti-Filipino riots in Watsonville.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, March 25, 1930.

1. ECONOMIC. The whole series of events before, during, and after the riots are permeated by economic factors. For nearly two years preceding the riots, organized labor in California has been fostering a movement to exclude Filipino laborers from the United States because the latter have a lower standard of living which enables them to work for less wages. On the other hand, Filipino labor contractors have pushed up the wages for the members of their race; the Filipinos have figured in the development of new agricultural industries, but there has been also a displacement of Americans and European immigrants by Filipinos. The total number of displacements evidently does not run very high in the thousands, for the total number of Filipinos in the entire state of California is put by the California Department of Industrial Relations at 34,000 at the most. The displacements have been large enough, however, to arouse serious antagonism.

This invasion charge is not cancelled in the minds of Watsonville laborers by the fact that the lettuce industry, 'one of the largest in the Watsonville district, has been built there largely on Filipino "stoop labor."⁵⁰ No one else seems to be available to do the "stoop labor" at early hours in the morning as efficiently as do the Filipinos, even at higher wages. Itinerant white laborers, living from auto camp to auto camp do not furnish the steady labor needed throughout the season. Many of them work a few days, do not like the work, and move on. The town boys, the unskilled hangers-about-town are even more unsatisfactory

⁵⁰ By "stoop labor" is meant that type of work where it is necessary to stoop over, as in the weeding or thinning of lettuce.

to the lettuce and asparagus farmers. The Japanese and Chinese are not available in large enough numbers. The unskilled Mexicans are less efficient. Very few farmers want to bring in the necessary two or three thousand Negroes, fearing even more serious race problems. "Drive out the Filipinos," a farmer says, "and you destroy our lettuce industry. Then those city agitators against the Filipinos will pay." This attitude is further expressed as follows:

"But if our own people won't do the work—in fact, many of us are incapable of doing it, what will our produce growers do? Abandon their investments? And come into town and become pinochle players? It is a fine thing to recline, at ease in a luxurious office chair and tell us that this alien labor is dangerous to our material interests and our country's welfare. But what remedy do you propose to help us out and give us the labor that will put in, and harvest, our crops."⁵¹

The problem is old, very old. New-coming immigrants from Europe, one group after another since the days of Benjamin Franklin have come to our shores, representing lower standards of living, and working "more hours for less wages." In consequence each group has faced antagonism, ill will, prejudice. Whenever an incoming group has competed successfully with, and thrown established interests out of work, trouble has flared up.

During these invasion and conflict periods, no general social control has been exercised. In the United States, we have relied

⁵¹ *Evening Pajaronian*, February 8, 1930.

on laissez faire, that is, on letting things drift on until "they work themselves out." Some one has put it this way: "We'll solve our Filipino problem like we do all the rest of our problems. We'll let it get as bad as possible, until something terrible happens, and then we wake up and solve it with a bang. We'll probably bungle it and make many matters worse in the solving." In the story of labor conflicts our tendency has been to allow the weaker group to develop defense attitudes and to fight back. We allowed one group and one district after another to be pitted blindly against the others. The farmers around Watsonville, for instance, report that if they are compelled to pay sixty cents an hour for "stoop labor" instead of the present forty cents they cannot compete economically with the lettuce growers of Southern California or Southern Arizona who employ "cheap" Mexican labor. Our country is so large and diversified that many areas are continually in conflict with others; many economic groups are working against the interests of others.⁵² The strange immigrant is continually in danger of being ground to pieces between competitive forces. Competition to a certain degree is stimulating and initiative-creating. Beyond this degree it stifles and crushes certain economic classes—to the profit of others. Excess competition breeds bolshevism in any country. The race riots under consideration testify vigorously to the need of a far-reaching understanding of the effects of excess competition and

⁵² Much unemployment is involuntary while at the same time many acres of tillable land is held out of use "involving many disadvantages that increase the cost of living." More emphasis is sometimes put on speculation, than on productive labor; the latter is a public necessity; the former is not.

an intelligent development of co-operation to the advantage of all, not to the gain of the strongest few.⁵³

2. RACIAL. Closely knit into the economic phases of a race riot are the racial elements of color, language, customs, and so on. Americans are continually competing vigorously with each other; they are continually underselling, underbidding each other, throwing each other out of employment without riots ensuing. The different color and culture of an immigrant, a Filipino for example, sets him off as a special target. The Filipino is judged as being an outsider; he does not belong to the "in-group." The weaknesses and competition of the members of the "in-group" among themselves are condoned and excused. Within the "American" group there are many people who live far below a decent standard of living and who work long hours for less pay but no one seems to get very excited about it. But the weaknesses and the competition of the members of the "out-group" are not excused by the "in-group," but charged and multiplied against the "out-group." Even though the Philippines are under the jurisdiction of the United States Filipinos are judged as belonging to the "out-group" by many Americans. They are lumped in with undesirable Orientals. The fact that they are decidedly

⁵³ Our highly individualistic economic system did not bring serious problems when our country was new or young and growing. But we are becoming so large and complicated that we are drifting toward serious economic conflicts, which historically have ended by swinging from one extreme to another. Intelligent, broad-minded social control would bring about the needed modifications in our economic system, and prevent a possible swing through a period of bloodshed to the opposite extreme, with its train of new and possibly more serious evils.

human, that they are a part of the human race, is overlooked by many "big-hearted, one hundred per cent Christian Americans." Instead of seeing the Filipino's problems in a comprehensive way, of rising above prejudices, and of solving the problem in the light of a fundamental grasp of basic issues, many Americans draw back at times in a superior way, clench our fists, and advocate the boot even for those who are weaker than ourselves. Other Americans advocate fair play and would make sacrifices in favor of good will.

3. POPULATION UNBALANCE. An examination of Filipino immigration figures shows a one-sided immigration of males, particularly between the ages of sixteen and thirty. "Out of every 100 Filipinos who came to California during the ten years, 1920-1929, 93 were males and 7 were females. During the 10 years considered there were admitted into California 1,395 Filipino males for every 100 Filipino females admitted. While the ratio of Filipino males to females coming to California is 14 to 1, the ratio of males to females in the total California population is 1.1 to 1."⁵⁴

Coupled with this male preponderance is the fact that 79.4 per cent of Filipino immigration is "between 16 to 30 years of age."⁵⁵ Another related fact is that "77.3 per cent of the Filipinos coming to California are single compared with the 47.9 per cent of the total population of the state who are unmarried."⁵⁶ This dis-

⁵⁴ "Facts About Filipino Immigration into California," 1930, W. J. French, Department of Industrial Relations, San Francisco, California, p. 12.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

proportion between the sexes of the Filipino immigrants leads to special problems. For instance in the Resolutions⁵⁷ directed against the Filipinos, published a few days before the Watsonville riots, it was said that the Filipino boys "dress up" in the latest styles of clothes, buy co-operatively a Rolls Royce, and capture the admiring glances of American girls. In the newspaper accounts of the riots the offended American youth are quoted as referring to the Filipinos as "goo-goos," evidently a defense reaction term. The dance hall situation with nine white girls dancing with Filipino youth was highly inflammatory. The mores had been defied.

The actions of ambitious young Filipinos, far from home, without their own women folk, in trying to attract the attention of American girls are natural. Who can say that American boys, in a far away country, under similar circumstances, would not seek the company of the native girls? Who can say that their records would be perfect? Some Filipinos "fall in love" with American girls, a few intermarry; many are resorting to the taxi-dance halls. The situation is unfortunate for the Filipinos, although on the whole they have conducted themselves creditably considering the distorted circumstances.

It has been suggested that Filipino women should be encouraged to come to the United States so that the Filipinos here might marry among their own race. This is a logical suggestion, but at once calls to mind the experiment of bringing in Japanese women, the large families that resulted, and the increased race

⁵⁷ Of the Northern Monterey Chamber of Commerce.

antagonism that developed in this country against the Japanese.

For Filipino young men to be here alone is abnormal; for them to send for Filipino women will not entirely solve the problem, even if the plan were feasible; for them to cast adventuring eyes toward American girls arouses the jealousy of American young men. Here, therefore, is a difficult problem. Economic opportunities bring the Filipino young men into conflict with American race and sex prejudices. A better balance between the numbers of the sexes of the Filipinos is perhaps the least difficult way out, but to reach this goal will call for careful, co-operative action on the part of all concerned.

4. LAW AND ORDER. The Watsonville riots were pronounced by some of the citizens there as expressions of a general disrespect for law and order prevalent throughout our country at the present time. In every community there is doubtless a lawless element looking for an opportunity to break loose. It has been suggested, therefore, that a set of resolutions against the Filipinos emanating from a justice of the peace was taken by a few as a sign that outbreaks against the Filipinos would not be considered a serious offence.

Police control was slow at the start of the riots: "Why were crowds of rowdies permitted to run the streets of Watsonville, when any number of cases of violence at their hands had been reported?" asks the editor of the *Watsonville Register*.⁵⁸ After a momentum had developed, the rioting leaped the bounds of control. "The rowdies would bob up anywhere—you couldn't

⁵⁸ January 24, 1930, p. 1.

catch them,”—is one summary of the situations. The mob spirit became rampant. “You can’t tell what a person will do when the mob spirit gets away with him.”

The impression prevailed among many people that the riots could have been stopped at the beginning by positive police action. Says a writer in the *Evening Pajaronian*:⁵⁹ “What makes us sore is the fact that the principal ringleaders in those mobs were youths whom any able-bodied policeman could have handled with a stout rattan rod. The tolerance shown their conduct was misplaced. They should have been advised to disperse and go home, especially the high school lads, who, gaping around, served to make up the cowardly mob that was encouraged by their presence.”

Behind the lawless attitudes of certain of the youth and the apparent slowness of police action at the start was also a certain public lethargy and carelessness. Says the *Pajaronian*’s correspondent: “And many of our good people laughed over the outburst of spirits on the part of the young fellows who started the rioting. We lettuce growers have thousands of dollars invested in that industry. We pay heavy taxes on the same. Why should we be advised to stand by our property and shoot—shoot to kill—as mobs of our own people were coming out to set fire to, and burn down our property?”⁶⁰ It would seem that at the start, there was a strong public opinion against the Filipinos and hence those who began the rioting expected “to get away with it.” They expected that the police and that justice would be lenient. But

⁵⁹ February 8, 1930, p. 2.

⁶⁰ February 8, 1930, p. 2.

when the rioting became increasingly violent, then the law-abiding people took action in the name of law and order—partly to protect themselves, partly to save the reputation of the city, and partly to safeguard the Filipinos. When public opinion turned, law and order came back.⁶¹

5. LEADERSHIP. As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, community leadership in the broad sense had not been developed. Business men who profit by the trade of the Filipinos were favorable, while others who did not so profit were antagonistic. The police had trouble in rising to the occasion. The best citizens were slow to act. The church leaders wished to do the right thing but felt that somehow public opinion was against them, and that if they stood for fair play for the Filipinos, their influential church members would turn against them. The major constituency of the Y. M. C. A. was apparently against the Filipinos.

The Filipino leaders were not united. The Filipino labor contractors confined their attention largely to supervising “stoop labor” jobs. The Filipino civic and social leaders broke into two groups: those who replied in kind, who talked in fiery terms, who resented unkind thrusts, who felt outraged; and those who cautioned restraint, order, peace despite taunts, insinuations, brickbats, beatings, gunshots.

⁶¹ Harry Carr, columnist of the *Los Angeles Times*, visited Watsonville soon after the rioting and summed up his analysis of the situation as follows (in part): “Mobbing Filipinos is becoming an entertaining form of popular amusement. The reason for this is that they are mostly scared little boys who can’t fight back. It was a great mistake that the police of Watsonville did not deal adequately with the first mob who started this merry ruffianism. That would have ended it right there.” *Times*, January 31, 1930, part 2, p. 1.

In other words in this riot situation there were few persons who were able to rise to the level of comprehensive leadership. Some had a rational grasp of the major issues in the many-sided controversy but public opinion or other factors kept them from expressing themselves or from acting. There were some who comprehended most of the difficult angles of the problem, and rose above a partisan position, who said that "we must work this thing out together, that all the people directly and indirectly concerned need to come together, put emotion and prejudice aside, and in all sincerity speak frankly and kindly face to face," not in heated debate or argument but in mutual contribution. In other words, they need to meet as do physicians in a council chamber who came together not as antagonists but to diagnose and prescribe treatment for a baffling problem. There is need that a regulation of Filipino immigration be developed which will be fair to both the people of the Philippines and the United States alike. The temptation to move from the present extreme of allowing unlimited numbers of Filipino laborers to enter, to the opposite extreme of exclusion is great. Somewhere in between is probably to be found the desirable solution, to be arrived at by a joint commission of Americans and Filipinos trained in statecraft and social science.

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